

Delta Counties Coalition

Contra Costa County · Sacramento County · San Joaquin County · Solano County · Yolo County

"Working together on water and Delta issues"

July 10, 2020

Dear Members of the Delta Congressional Delegation:

The Delta Counties Coalition (DCC) writes regarding the significant water infrastructure needs in our region, State and Nation. As the Congress continues work on the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA), a broader economic recovery package, and appropriations measures, we urge you to prioritize additional Federal investments in flood control and water supply and water quality improvements, including the following key programs and accounts:

Section 219 Environmental Infrastructure (Corps). – Support no less than \$500 million for the Army Corps of Engineers' General Environmental Infrastructure (EI) Authority to assist non-federal interests in carrying out important water-related environmental infrastructure and resource protection and development projects. EI funds can be used to support up to 75 percent of the cost of planning, design and construction of a wide array of needed water infrastructure investments including water supply, wastewater, and stormwater and ecosystem restoration projects. California has \$40 million in EI authority that can be used to support any EI project statewide, as well tens of millions of dollars available under various regional EI authorities.

WaterSMART Program, Title XVI (Reclamation). – Support no less than \$200 million for the Bureau of Reclamation, under the WaterSMART Program, Title XVI Water Reclamation and Reuse Program, to significantly expand opportunities for water reuse planning and construction assistance to help accelerate construction of individually authorized and WIIN Act-eligible Title XVI water reuse projects. Title XVI-eligible water recycling and reuse projects provide multiple benefits, including increased water supply reliability, eco-system benefit, groundwater management and enhancements, and water quality improvements. There is a large and growing backlog of more than \$700 million in Title XVI-eligible, shovel-ready projects. Water reuse plays a key role in greater water supply reliability in response to recurring droughts and greater hydrologic variability and should be fully supported.

Sewer Overflow and Stormwater Reuse Municipal Grants Program (EPA). – Support an allocation of not less than \$225 million for EPA's new Sewer Overflow and Stormwater Reuse Municipal Grants Program, which creates an opportunity for public agencies to compete for much needed grant funding to support the construction of projects that capture, treat, or reuse combined sanitary sewer overflows or stormwater. Improved

stormwater management can help reduce localized flood damages, as well as provide an important water source for expanded groundwater recharge initiatives.

WIFIA (EPA & Corps) and RIFIA (Reclamation). – Support robust investments in the EPA and Corps of Engineers' Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) programs and support authorization and appropriations as soon as possible to establish a similar opportunity under the Bureau of Reclamation (RIFIA). Investments in these programs offer access to long-term, low-cost federally backed financing to support and accelerate non-federal investments in critically important water supply, clean water, stormwater, water reuse, ecosystem restoration, and flood damage reduction projects. An allocation of \$250 million in these programs would generate no less than \$25 billion in 35-year low-cost federally backed financing (today's rates are 1.27 percent) to support critically important non-federal water infrastructure projects. Congress should also consider extending the WIFIA/RIFIA repayment period from the current 35-years to 50-years, or the useful life of an approved project, whichever is less, which could significantly increase the annual debt service savings at no additional cost to the government.

With regard to WIFIA, we must note that we are gravely concerned that the program could potentially be a source of funds for construction of a Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta isolated conveyance facility. The bedrock principle upon which the DCC was founded was our joint opposition to any such conveyance given the enormous negative impacts of such a facility on our counties. We have consistently opposed Federal and State support for isolated Delta conveyance, and respectfully ask that you seek to include language in any future WIFIA legislation to ensure that WIFIA financing cannot be used to construct the highly controversial isolated Delta conveyance facility.

WIIN Act Storage Account (Reclamation). – Support the allocation of not less than \$500 million for the Bureau of Reclamation's surface and ground water storage projects under Section 4007 of the WIIN Act (P.L.114-322). The requested funding would provide critically important support for resilient water supplies and related infrastructure, including priority groundwater storage projects.

WaterSMART Program, WaterSMART Grants (Reclamation). – Support no less than \$100 million for WaterSMART Grants under the Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART Program to advance greater water supply diversification and generate critical improvements in water efficiency. WaterSMART allows Reclamation to work with tribes, States, local governments, and non-governmental organizations to implement projects to: conserve and use water more efficiently; increase the production of hydropower; mitigate conflict risk in areas at a high risk of future water conflict; and, accomplish other benefits that contribute to water supply reliability in the Delta and West-wide.

Fish Passage and Fish Screens (Reclamation). – Support no less than \$100 million to the Bureau of Reclamation, under Additional Funding for Ongoing Work, Fish Passage and Fish Screens. The funds are needed to accelerate work on a variety of fish passage and fish screen projects that provide essential protection to threatened and endangered fish species and would ensure a sustainable, efficient, and reliable water supply for agricultural and human needs. The requested funds would support fish passage and fish

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screens projects that provide the highest level of fishery protection in conjunction with efficient water delivery.

Multibenefit Projects to Improve Watershed Health (Reclamation). – Support the authorization of a new grant program through Reclamation – \$150 million per year for FY 2021-24 and appropriations of no less than \$150 million – to, among other things, improve watershed function, protect against invasive species and restore, protect, and enhance natural ecosystems, floodplains and managed wetlands for improved species habitat and other benefits, including flood control, water supply, and groundwater recharge.

Thank you for your consideration.

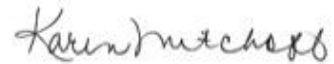
Sincerely,



Don Nottoli
Supervisor, Sacramento County



Skip Thomson
Supervisor, Solano County



Karen Mitchoff
Supervisor, Contra Costa
County



Oscar Villegas
Supervisor, Yolo County



Chuck Winn
Supervisor, San Joaquin
County